

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RANGOO 00606 240856Z

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-02 OES-03 AID-05 PM-04 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1031

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0606

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR BM

SUBJ: NARCOTICS CONTROL: MULTISPECTRAL OPIUM POPPY SENSOR (MOPS)

REF: (A) STATE 041412 (B) RANGOON 535

1. APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS ON THE FEASIBILITY FOR A MOPS PROGRAM IN BURMA. WE TAKE NO ISSUE (NOR ARE WE IN A POSITION TO DO SO) WITH THE TECHNICAL LIMITATIONS OF MOPS HERE AND IN FACT INDICATED THAT SUCH MIGHT BE THE CASE DURING RUDY HALL'S TALKS WITH THE GUB LAST OCTOBER. HOWEVER, AS A MATTER OF TACTICS AND, TO A DEGREE, GOOD FAITH, WE FEEL THAT DAMPENING GUB INTEREST CAN BEST BE DONE BY HAVING A TECHNICAL EXPERT REVIEW SITUATION IN BURMA SO THAT MOPS LIMITATIONS ARE CLEAR TO BURMESE AS WELL. IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT IT WAS THE U.S. SIDE WHICH BROUGHT UP THIS APPROACH, DURING AMBASSADOR VANCE'S VISIT LAST MARCH AND DURING COL. AUNG HTAY'S TOUR OF THE U.S. LAST MAY-JUNE. IN FACT, BURMESE STILL REMIND US THAT THEY SAW THE SENSING PROJECT IN ACTION IN MEXICO AND WERE IMPRESSED BY IT.

2. THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE GUB THAT WE HAVE NOT SIMPLY CHANGED OUR MINDS BUT HAVE FOUND THAT THIS IS NOT THE BEST MEANS TO THE AGREED UPON END, I.E., LOCATION OF ILLICIT POPPY FIELDS. ONCE THE LOGIC OF OUR ARGUMENTS FROM A TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED EXPERT COMES CLEAR TO THE BURMESE, WE CAN PROCEED TO DISCUSS ALTERNATE MEANS OF POPPY IDENTIFICATION, PERHAPS INCLUDING LIGHT OBSERVATION AIRCRAFT.

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PAGE 02 RANGOO 00606 240856Z

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